

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
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USIA-06 DHA-02 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY MASERU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6525
INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM UNN
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA UNN
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE UNN
AMEMBASSY LONDON UNN
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA UNN
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO UNN
AMCONSUL CAPETOWN UNN
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OCON, PFOR, XJ, SF, LT, US
SUBJECT: AAI CONFERENCE WRAP-UP

REF: A. MASERU 1437, B. MASERU 1493 (NOTAL),

1. WITH ITS TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS BARELY
DIGESTED, THE GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO FOUND ITSELF IN LATE NOVEMBER
FACED WITH ANOTHER LARGE GATHERING, LESS IMPOSING IN SIZE BUT FAR
MORE POTENT WITH PROMISE OF POLITICAL POLEMICS. FEW IN MASERU KNEW
WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN INSTITUTE CONFERENCE
CONVENED HERE NOVEMBER 29 - DECEMBER 3 UNDER THE THEME "1976-1977:

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NEW DIRECTIONS IN AFRICAN AMERICAN RELATIONS." THE PROSPECT OF 140

PARTICIPANTS FROM AFRICA AND THE UNITED STATES - INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT, AFRICAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND LEADERS OF BLACK LIBERATION MOVEMENTS - CONVENING IN THIS SMALL CAPITAL OF A POSTAGE STAMP-SIZED COUNTRY WAS A BIT DIZZYING FOR ALL CONCERNED. THIS WAS THE LARGEST CONFERENCE EVER CONVENED BY AAI, ALMOST DOUBLE THE SIZE OF THE PREVIOUS CONFERENCE. ALTHOUGH HOTEL SPACE WAS ADEQUATE, THE NUMBERS OVERWHELMED LESOTHO'S TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS WITH JAN SMUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN JOHANNESBURG AND THE ENSUING TRAVEL SNARL PROVOKED A CONTROVERSY WHICH HAD NOT BEEN INCLUDED IN THE AGENDA - THE DIFFICULTY FOR OUTSPOKEN CRITICS OF SOUTH AFRICA'S RACIAL POLICIES OF OBTAINING SOUTH AFRICAN VISAS.

2. THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONFERENCE DID NOT REPRESENT A COMPLETE SPECTRUM OF OPINION ON SOUTHERN AFRICA. ALMOST ALL, IF NOT ALL, THE CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS COULD BE DESCRIBED AS FAVORING EARLY BLACK MAJORITY RULE IN THE WHITE-RULED STATES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. THERE WERE NUMEROUS PARTICIPANTS WHOSE OPINIONS RAN TO FAVORING THE USE OF ARMED FORCE TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE. THE U.S. PARTICIPATION INCLUDED A FEW MODERATES BUT WAS HEAVILY WEIGHTED IN FAVOR OF ADVOCATES OF STRONG U.S. INITIATIVES TO BRING ABOUT BLACK RULE IN NAMIBIA AND SOUTH AFRICA. AAI PRESIDENT MR. COTTER CONFIDED IN THE CHARGE THAT A COUPLE OF SOUTH AFRICAN WHITES WHOM AAI ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO INVITE WERE DROPPED WHEN AAI WAS INFORMED THAT NIGERIAN COMMISSIONER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS BRIG. JOSEPH GARBA WOULD NOT ATTEND THE CONFERENCE IF THESE PEOPLE WERE PRESENT.

3. POSSIBLY 26 AFRICAN COUNTRIES WERE REPRESENTED - MAYBE MORE. AAI DID NOT PUBLISH A DEFINITIVE LIST OF PARTICIPANTS. THE EMBASSY LIST INCLUDED PARTICIPANTS FROM ANGOLA, ALGERIA, SUDAN, MALI, LIBERIA, NIGERIA, ZIMBABWE, GHANA, KENYA, SWAZILAND, SOUTH AFRICA, TANZANIA, GUINEA-BISSAU, BOTSWANA, EGYPT, TUNISIA, ZAMBIA, GUINEA, UGANDA, ETHIOPIA AND IVORY COAST. MORE THAN 50 AMERICANS PARTICIPATED INCLUDING 13 MEMBERS OF CONGRESS (SENATORS DICK CLARK AND JOSEPH BIDEN AND REPRESENTATIVES CHARLGES DIGGS, ANDREW YOUNG, SILVIO CONTE, JOHN ANDERSON, DON BONKER, YVONNE BURKE, WILLIAM CLAY, CARDISS COLLINS, CHARLES RANGEL, CHARLES WHALEN AND DELEGATE WALTER FAUNTROY). IN ADDITION TO THE CONGRESSIONAL PARTICIPANTS THERE WERE REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT (ASSISTANT SECRETARY WILLIAM E. SCHAUFEL, JR.) AND AID (ASSISTANT ADMINI-
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STRATOR STANLEY S. SCOTT), BUSINESS, LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT, FOUNDATIONS, PRESS AND, AND BLACK RIGHTS, OPINION, AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

4. THE TONE OF THE CONFERENCE WAS SET BY THE REMARKS OF THE OPENING SPEAKERS (REF A). THE CONFERENCE WAS ADDRESSED BY LESOTHO PRIME MINISTER LEABAU JONATHAN, BRIG. GARBA AND SEN. DICK CLARK. PRIME MINISTER JONATHAN'S REMARKS CONDEMNING APARTHEID AND THE CREATION

OF TRANSKEI OPENED THE WAY TO A HARSH PRESENTATION BY BRIG. GARBA SHARPLY CRITICIZING THE UNITED STATES FOR IGNORING AFRICA AND THEN FOR SEEKING TO EXPLOIT THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN SITUATION TO ITS OWN ADVANTAGE. SEN. CLARK CONCLUDED THE SUBSTANTIVE PORTION OF THE OPENING CEREMONY BY MAKING A NINE-POINT ACTION COMMITMENT TO BRING ABOUT PEACEFUL CHANGE TO MAJORITY RULE IN ZIMBABWE, NAMIBIA AND SOUTH AFRICA. THIS ORIGINAL THRUST OF THE CONFERENCE OPENING SESSION WAS NOT MODIFIED DURING THE CLOSED SESSIONS AND THE CLOSING PUBLIC SESSION REMARKS BY LESOTHO FOREIGN MINISTER MOLAPO AND CONGRESSMAN CHARLES DIGGS, TOGETHER WITH A RINGING STATEMENT BY THE PARTICIPATING MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS (REF B), SET THE CAPSTONE ON A PROGRAM FOR RAPID CHANGE BACKED BY DYNAMIC ACTION ON THE PART OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. THERE WERE SOME IN THE AMERICAN DELEGATION WHO RECOGNIZED THAT SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES MIGHT BE ENCOUNTERED IN TRYING TO ACHIEVE THE NUMEROUS POLICY INITIATIVES AND INTERMEDIARY STEPS SPELLED OUT BY THE BLACK CAUCUS PARTICIPANTS.

5. PARTICIPATION BY THE GOL WAS MINIMAL EVENTHOUGHT THE GOVERNMENT DESIGNATED A DELEGATION OF 20 PARTICIPANTS. NEVERTHELESS, THE GOL OFFICIALS SEEMED ELATED WITH THE DIRECTION THE CONFERENCE TOOK. THE DRUM FIRE OF ANTI-APARTHEID COMMENTARY BY CONGRESSIONAL PARTICIPANTS WAS PLEASING TO THE EARS OF LESOTHO OFFICIALS WHO TOO LONG HAVE FELT IT NECESSARY TO BE RESTRAINED IN THEIR CRITICISM OF THE GIANT NEIGHBOR'S RACIAL POLICIES. IT WAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RUN THE COURSE WITH THE LEADING ADVOCATES OF CHANGE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND TO IMPROVE LESOTHO'S IMAGE IN THE OAU.

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6. THE GOL MAY HAVE FELT SOME SATISFACTION WITH THE FACT THAT SO MANY PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONFERENCE ENCOUNTERED DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING VISAS FROM SOUTH AFRICA AND HENCE WE UNABLE TO COMPLETE

THEIR INITIAL OVERLAND TRAVEL PLANS TO MASERU FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN CITY OF BLOEMFONTEIN. THESE DIFFICULTIES, NECESSITATING LAST MINUTE CHARTER FLIGHTS TO FERRY CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS FROM JAN SMUTS TO MASERU, POINTED UP FOR GOL OFFICIALS THE TRUTH OF WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN SAYING OVER THE PAST MONTHS ABOUT THE NECESSITY FOR AN INTERNAL INTERNATIONAL AIR TERMINAL WHICH WOULD END LESOTHO'S DEPENDENCE ON SOUTH AFRICA AS AN ENTRY POINT
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FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS. CONGRESSMAN CONTE WON HIMSELF SPECIAL RECOGNITION FROM GOL OFFICIALS WITH HIS STRAIGHT FOWARD SUPPORT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF AN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN LESOTHO.

7. OF STILL FURTHER SATISFACTION TO LESOTHO OFFICIALS WERE THE FREQUENT REFERENCES TO INCREASED U.S. ASSISTANCE FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA WHICH THEY READ AS INCREASED ASSISTANCE FOR LESOTHO. ALL IN ALL AS PM JONATHAN EXPRESSED IT PRIVATELY,THE CONFERENCE SEEMED TO THE GOL TO REPRESENT "AN OPENING" IN THE DIRECTION OF EARLY AND SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND A RENEWED PLEDGE BY THE U.S. TO ACTIVELY PROMOTE SUCH CHANGE. ONLY AFTER THE CONFERENCE, WHEN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS REPORTED THE ALLEGED COMMENTS OF CONGRESSMAN ANDREW YOUNG THAT INDICATED HE WOULD SUPPORT CURTAILMENT OF U.S. ASSISTANCE TO LESOTHO ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE INCUMBENT GOVERNMENT DESTROYED DEMOCRACY HERE, DID THE OFFICIALS OF THE GOL BEGIN PERHAPS TO HAVE SOME SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT THE UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS OF THE CONFERENCE THEY HAD HOSTED.

8. WHETHER THE CONFERENCE IN FACT WILL HAVE A REAL EFFECT IN BRINGING ABOUT CHANGE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA REMAINS TO BE SEEN. AT

LEAST FOR THE PRESENT, MANY PARTICIPANTS MUST HAVE BEEN LEFT WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT AFRICAN LEADERS SEEKING BLACK MAJORITY RULE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA HAVE A NUMBER OF INFLUENTIAL SPOKESMEN IN THE CONGRESS. MOST OFFICIALS OF THIS GOVERNMENT ARE WISE ENOUGH TO APPRECIATE THAT THESE VOICES, IMPORTANT THOUGH THEY ARE, REPRESENT BY NO MEANS THE TOTALITY OF THE U.S. CONGRESS. ALTHOUGH THEY WERE DOUBTLESS COUNTING ON THE FACT THAT CONGRESSMAN YOUNG IS REPORTED TO BE CLOSE TO THE PRESIDENT-ELECT AND MIGHT SERVE THE INTERESTS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA AND LESOTHO, HIS ALLEGED REMARKS TO THE PRESS AFTER THE CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE WERE AN UNPLEASANT DASH OF COLD WATER THAT COOLED THE ENTHUSIASM, ANGERED SOME GOL OFFICIALS, AND POINTED TO THE WISDOM OF A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE.

9. COPIES OF PARTICIPANT LIST BEING POUCHED TO ADDRESSEES.
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Message Attributes

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